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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 003178

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/I

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: PRT DIYALA: ARAB AND KURD LEADERS ACCUSE GOI OF
NEGLECTING DISPUTED AREAS

REF: A. BAGHDAD 2844

[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 1311

Classified By: PRT Diyala Leader Lisa Piascik, Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

[1](#)1. This is a PRT Diyala cable.

[1](#)2. (C) Summary: During recent meetings with PRToffs, Kurd and Arab sheikhs and mayors in the disputed areas in Khanaqin agreed that their communities face ongoing neglect by both the GOI and Diyala provincial government (PGOV). They also voiced concerns about ongoing terrorist activity and violence around their communities, especially Saadiya and Jaloula. Several of these local leaders noted that problems between their two communities are often exaggerated for political gain, although lingering and ongoing tensions remain. In the end, the continuing heavy presence of the Iraqi Army (IA), ongoing insurgent activity, and a lack of trust in the civilian government coupled with the provincial and central government's neglect appears to be encouraging the local populations of Jaloula and Saadiya to look to the IA to address many civilian functions. End Summary.

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KURDS AND ARABS AGREE: GOI NEGLECTS SAADIYA AND JALOULA
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[1](#)3. (C) Kurd and Arab leaders in the disputed areas in Khanaqin continue to agree on one basic theme, that the central government and the Diyala provincial government have neglected their communities. In recent meetings with PRToffs, Kurd and Arab Sheikhs from the cities of Qara Tapa, Saadiya, and Jaloula in the Khanaqin district of Diyala complained about a lack of essential services in these areas, including water, electricity, roads, and schools. Paramount Arab Sheikh, Munther al Jabbouri, from Qara Tapa echoed other Arab sheikhs in the area when he commented that his people no longer have confidence in the provincial or central government or its will or ability to deliver services. A Kurdish sheikh from Saadiya, Jasim Mohammed Hussain, complained that the Diyala PGOV was more interested in benefiting itself than its citizens. The sheiks complained about government contracts only going to contractors from Baqubah or Baghdad, and expressed anger about receiving what they perceive as an inequitable share of government and security jobs.

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CONCERNS ABOUT ONGOING VIOLENCE IN SAADIYA AND JALOULA
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[1](#)4. (C) Arab and Kurd leaders also expressed concern about ongoing violence in Jaloula, Saadiya, and Qara Tapa. In recent weeks rocket-propelled grenade (RKG3) and IED attacks have targeted both U.S. forces and local officials. Arab Sheikhs such as Rum Mahmood of Jaloula attributed the violence to a "few bad members" of certain tribes who are influenced by outsiders, i.e. AQI and other insurgent groups

not from the province Others, such as Kurdish Sheikh Mohamed Sheikh Ali attribute the violence to a larger campaign of violence against Kurds in the area. Mayor Ahmad of Saadiya told PRToffs that the ongoing violence and presence of AQI, Naqshabandi (JRTN) and the new Baath party continues to contribute to a climate of fear among the local communities. He said average citizens do not often report insurgents because they do not trust the local police to keep the information confidential. As an example, he recounted that a father and son from the Arab Jabbouri tribe in Saadiya were recently assassinated after informing police about insurgent activities.

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SHEIKS AND MAYOR NOTE EXAGGERATED CLAIMS OF ARAB-KURD TENSIONS
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15. (C) Key leaders noted that average Kurds and Arabs in Jaloula, Saadiya and Qara Tapa get along with one another without incident. In fact, some leaders on both sides visibly bristled at what they see as unfair stereotypes and exaggerations by political groups of the problems between their two communities. Underscoring this view, Jaloula's Kurdish Mayor, Anwar Hussein Mikael Anwar, reported to PRToffs that the Political Union of Kurdistan (PUK) is purposefully overstating Kurd-Arab tensions and claiming that Kurdish families are forced to leave Jaloula due to ISF intimidation in order to influence the implementation of Article 140 in a manner that is favorable to the KRG. Mayor Anwar asserted that most Kurdish families are leaving the area because they are related to Assayish (the Kurdish intelligence service) or Peshmerga forces that abused Arab

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citizens in Jaloula between 2003 and 2008 and now fear retaliation. Anwar further stated that he now fears for his life at the hands of the PUK because he spoke this truth, and because he has recently abandoned the PUK for Kurdistan's Change Party. (Note: Anwar has recently come under investigation by the PUK for alleged corrupt practices. End note.)

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YET UNDERLYING ARAB-KURD TENSIONS REMAIN
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16. (C) While both Arab and Kurdish sheiks generally noted goodwill between their communities, tensions over past and current problems continue to linger and rose to the surface during several joint meetings. Kurdish sheiks from Saadiya and Jaloula noted that Kurds were leaving the area due to both security concerns and lack of services. The Kurdish mayor of Saadiya, Ahmed Thamer Ali, privately noted to PRToffs that he and many Kurdish families feared that they would be targeted by JRTN and new Baath party elements that had infiltrated the ISF (Note: PRT is unable to confirm whether ISF has actually been infiltrated by these groups. End Note). A Kurdish sheikh from Jaloula, Asi Shawket Majeed Bajelan, brought up the recent case of a Kurdish sheikh being beaten by Emergency Response Forces (ERF) and a Kurdish Sheikh from Saadiya, Mohamed Sheikh Ali, accused the ISF of being complicit in the death of several Kurds killed in Saadiya over the past two months.

17. (C) Such concerns were also raised by the Arab side. An Arab sheikh from the Kurwi tribe, Mudhir Saleh Abd from Jaloula, became agitated when discussing the disappearance of his son two years ago. A Turkomen council member from Jaloula, Saleh Mahdi Saleh Al Byati, stated that although no one in the room would say it, the Arab sheikhs accuse the Kurdish Assayish for Mudhir's son's disappearance. Arab Sheikh Ameen Ahmed Raheed complained that his family was displaced to Jaloula from the city of Khanaqin in 2003 and that they had not received proper compensation for being forced out by Kurdish troops. (Note: The Arab Kurwi tribe was

moved into the city of Khanaqin under Saddam's "Arabization" efforts and then subsequently pushed out by Kurdish troops in 2003 and displaced into areas around Jaloula. Some members of the Kurwi tribe have been arrested for terrorist activities and are accused by local Arab and Kurd leaders to have ties with AQI, JRTN and the new Baath party. Kurwi tribe members also figure prominently on the staff and in the ranks of the ERF battalion in Jaloula. In response to complaints about the ERF, its supervision has recently been transferred from the IP, also Kurwi dominated, to the IA. End note.)

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ISF FILLING VACUUM LEFT BY CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT
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18. (C) The ongoing struggle between the KRG and central government for control over the disputed areas in Khanaqin has undermined the capacity of the local civilian leadership, especially with regards to financial resources, in areas including Jaloula and Saadiya. After 2003 and prior to September 2008 when the 5th IA Division pushed north during Operation Benevolent Diyala, Kurdish forces existed as the predominant power in the disputed areas in Khanaqin. As a result of de facto Kurdish oversight during this five-year time period, cities in Khanaqin received most of whatever assistance was provided to them from the KRG, rather than the provincial government in Diyala or GOI (reftel B). This legacy continues today in areas north of the line of Iraqi Army control (which local interlocutors on both sides believe QArmy control (which local interlocutors on both sides believe will be solidified by the proposed joint checkpoints). For example, the Mayor of Khanaqin, Mohammed Wala Hassan, told PRToffs that he receives his salary from the KRG. Yet the current situation is different for the southern disputed areas in Khanaqin that are now under IA control (including Jaloula, Saadiya, and Qara Tapa). Mayor Ahmed of Saadiya explained to PRToffs that these cities are essentially a no man's land, receiving little assistance from either the KRG (which no longer has de facto control of these areas) or the provincial government in Diyala (that has long ignored these areas due to security concerns and the previous KRG influence). With a lack of consistent civilian support, these communities are reliant on the ISF for basic needs such as providing humanitarian assistance and mediating community disputes. In a telling show of this dynamic, an Iraqi army Colonel from the 4th Brigade, 1st IA Division noted to PRToffs in front of Kurd and Arab sheikhs that the PRT should come to him on reconstruction projects.

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19. (C) Comment: The fact that Arab and Kurd leaders in the disputed areas of Khanaqin are willing to jointly discuss security issues demonstrates a certain level of cooperation. Nevertheless, it is impossible to ignore the simmering resentments and tensions between these two groups) even in a formal meeting setting. If the provincial government in Diyala and the central government do not make a concerted effort to actively exercise real civilian control and leadership in these areas, it will continue to encourage ISF domination of civilian authorities. Moreover, it will leave these communities vulnerable to other groups) including insurgents) who can exploit their dissatisfaction with the current central and provincial government to ignite ethnic tensions. PRT will advise the Governor and Provincial Council (whose Chairman is from Khanaqin) that it would be well advised to address the needs of their constituencies. End Comment.
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